

Residential Study Group (RSG)
November 15, 2016
Arlington Town Hall, First Floor Conference Room
6:00-7:30PM

Attendees: Walter Fey, Zoning Board of Appeals; Steve McKenna, Town Manager appointee; Pasi Miettinen, Town Manager appointee; Wynelle Evans, Town Manager appointee; Michael Byrne, Inspectional Services; Janice Weber, Town Meeting Member; Andrew Bunnell, Redevelopment Board; Jenny Raitt, Planning and Community Development; Laura Wiener, Planning and Community Development; Adam Chapdelaine, Town Manager; Town Meeting Member; Bill Copithorne, Town Manager appointee; Wendy Richter, Master Plan Implementation Committee; Elizabeth Pyle, Town Manager appointee.

Jenny opened the meeting. The group reviewed the prior meeting's discussion and outcomes. The group then began to provide updates on various "homework" items, including ZBA memo review, driveways, setbacks, building height, massing, and other research. Steve said that his subgroup's work was 60% complete. They were looking at a range of other communities Zoning Bylaws and met with building inspectors in Arlington, Belmont, Melrose, Winchester, and Bedford. He did not have any summary to provide in writing or any recommendation at this time. He said that Arlington's zoning aligns with other communities and, at times, Arlington is more restrictive than most of them. Further, he said that the current Zoning Bylaw accounts for means and grades already, in relation to building heights and massing. Lastly, he and other group members expressed concerns about existing houses that would want to build additions.

Walter reviewed Nat's memo on ZBA cases. He believes that many homeowners do not understand the ZBA process. Members of the group expressed an interest in simplifying rather than complicating the permitting process. We need to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to provide feedback on any changes. Equity is an issue.

The group then reviewed materials that Jenny distributed by email, including a construction agreement that is in use in Minneapolis, and materials on teardowns and historic preservation. The group thought the agreement (dubbed a "Good Neighbor" bylaw) was a good model for Arlington. Bill took the draft that Jenny circulated and edited it to reflect how it could be used in Arlington. Adam said that he would work with Town Counsel to take the construction agreement and work on a draft incorporating Bill's and other edits. The construction agreement could be a good starting place for this group because there is consensus.

Members of the group suggested consideration of surveying property owners and abutters to properties that were demolished and rebuilt. Jenny will work with Mike on a survey to owners/abutters and Bill, Wynelle, and Steve will help.

Pasi reviewed materials prepared for lot coverage and massing. The group reviewed and discussed Arlington Residential Building/ Lot Ratio Map. There was also discussion about how to incorporate more LEED requirements into the Zoning Bylaw. Pasi will follow-up with Nat on this item.

Liz and Jenny agreed to postpone discussion on driveways to the next meeting. Liz also suggested that the group have John Martin, an Industrial Hygienist, attend a future meeting and make a presentation.